3. How did Canadian Forces help end the War. (pg.237-243)

D-Day: The Normandy Invasion

**D-Day Overview**

On June 6th 1944 the Allied Forces landed on the coast of Normandy to attempt to take back France from the Axis. This was known as Operation Overlord or D-Day it is known for being one of the crucial Allied and Canadian victories during World War 2. According to Greenspan (2014) “156,000 Allied soldiers stormed a handful of beaches along the coast of Normandy, France” this was an incredible battle that would eventually lead to the recapture of France after about 2 month by the end of August 1944. The Normandy Invasion was fought on 5 different beaches Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. These beaches were taken by 3 different countries separately “two American, one Canadian and two British landing points”. Omaha and Utah were American, Gold and Sword were British and Juno was Canadian.

**Juno Beach Overview**

The most important for Canadian history though is Juno beach where Canada fought the Axis. Juno beach was attacked by the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, it was a bloody battle but eventually the Canadians Succeeded. During the landing on Juno Beach though the defences were tough the main obstacle were natural ones like reefs and “Roughly 30 percent of the landing craft at Juno were destroyed or damaged” stated by Drez(2016). But at sea the Canadians were mostly safe from German gunfire because the German machine guns were aimed at the beach so when they reached the beach there were astonishing casualties, “Company B of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles was cut down to one officer” according to Drez(2016). Eventually though the Canadians pushed through and met up with the British from Gold Beach though not without resistance from the heavily fortified German soldiers. These fortified Germans were tough and had many strong defences due to the Atlantic wall but no match to the near overkill amount of troops on D-Day.

**Juno Beach Defences**

On Juno beach the defenses were tough, Hitler’s Atlantic wall was massive and heavily fortified. The Atlantic wall had stronger defences in some areas and weaker in others, however they all mostly contained these basic fortifications. There were the Belgian gates 10 feet high metal barriers that were used to stop tanks from advancing with the barrier or sometimes anti-tank mines. The ramps were logs that were shoved into the sand and placed on the edge of the water to flip landing crafts these would also often be tipped with mines. Hedgehogs were large steel bars that were used as obstacles for infantry and under high tide would rip the hulls of the landing crafts. Barbed wire was placed at the high position as obstacles for infantry but tanks would easily crush them. Throughout the battlefield there were many mines mostly in the area of the barbed wire however they were placed everywhere. The mines were a significant obstacles on the beach for the tanks because to get through the wire it was required for the tanks to trample them. Another main defence was the pillboxes they were small concrete bunkers above ground often with machine guns. The pillboxes on Juno beach came in many shapes and sizes, though they would always have small slits in the walls for gunners to aim out of and would always be facing towards the beach. Finally the seawall, this was a small yet significant defence in the battle this cliff would prevent soldiers from easily overtaking the pillboxes it gave the machine guns more time to fire at the beach rather than retreating because of the soldiers rushing towards them.

**Significance of Juno Beach**

Juno Beach was very significant to Canada’s history however also to the history of the rest of the world, Canada helped end World War 2 and liberate France from its Nazi rulers. Canada’s victory was crucial on D-Day for helping the other Allied Forces push into Normandy. Without the success of D-Day the world may have been a different place France would have not been taken or taken at a later date which would have been devastating to the Soviets who needed a second front for the invasion of Berlin which led to the surrender of Germany. The battle is also important

-Conclusion

# REFERENCES

*D-Day Overview:*. (n.d.). Retrieved from The National D-Day Memorial: https://www.dday.org/history/d-day-the-invasion/overview.html

Foot, R. (2015, March 04). *Battle of Normandy*. Retrieved from The Canadian Encyclopedia: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/normandy-invasion/

Greenspan, J. (2014). *Landing at Normandy: The 5 Beaches of D-Day*. Retrieved from History.com: http://www.history.com/news/landing-at-normandy-the-5-beaches-of-d-day

Keegan, J. (2015, May 13). *Normandy Invasion*. Retrieved from Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/event/Normandy-Invasion